

Zephaniah

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-THE JPS TANAKH: Gender-Sensitive Edition

-<https://jps.org/books/the-jps-tanakh-gender-sensitive-edition/>

Zephaniah

Chapter 1

The word of G OD that came to Zephaniah son of Cushi son of Gedaliah son of Amariah son of Hezekiah, during the reign of King Josiah son of Amon of Judah.

I will sweep everything away From the face of the earth –declares G OD. I will sweep away human and animal; I will sweep away the birds of the sky And the fish of the sea. I will make the wicked stumble, a I will make the wicked stumble Meaning of Heb. uncertain. And I will destroy humankind From the face of the earth –declares G OD.

I will stretch out My arm against Judah And against all who dwell in Jerusalem; And I will wipe out from this place Every vestige of Baal, And the name of the priestlings b priestlings Heb. kemarim, a term used only of priests of heathen gods. along with the priests;

And those who bow down on the roofs To the host of heaven; And those who bow down and swear to G OD But also swear by Malcam; c Malcam Apparently identical with “Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites”; cf. 1 Kings 11.5.

And those who have forsaken G OD, And those who have not sought G OD And have not made inquiry.

Be silent before my Sovereign G OD, For the day of G OD is approaching; For G OD has prepared a sacrificial feast, d sacrificial feast I.e., a slaughter of sinners. Has bidden the guests purify themselves. e bidden the guests purify themselves I.e., invitations have already been issued in anticipation; cf. 1 Sam. 16.5.

And on the day of G OD 's sacrifice I will punish the officials And the king's sons, f king's sons Apparently brothers of King Amon, who exercised influence during the minority of King Josiah (2 Kings 22.1). And all who don a foreign vestment.

I will also punish on that day Everyone who steps over the threshold, g don a foreign vestment ... steps over the threshold Apparently two customs of heathen worship; cf. 2 Kings 10.22 and 1 Sam. 5.5. Who fill their master's h their master's I.e., King Josiah's. palace With lawlessness and fraud.

In that day there shall be –declares G OD – A loud outcry from the Fish Gate, And howling from the Mishneh, i Mishneh A quarter of Jerusalem; cf. 2 Kings 22.14. And a sound of great anguish from the hills.

The dwellers of the Machtesh j Machtesh Another quarter of Jerusalem.

howl; For all the traders have perished, All who weigh silver are wiped out.

At that time, I will search Jerusalem with lamps; And I will punish all those Who rest untroubled on their lees, Who say to themselves, “ G OD will do nothing, good or bad.”

Their wealth shall be plundered And their homes laid waste. They shall build houses and not dwell in them, Plant vineyards and not drink their wine.

The great day of G OD is approaching, Approaching most swiftly. Hark, the day of G OD! It is bitter: There a warrior shrieks! k Hark, the day of G

OD! / It is bitter: / There a warrior shrieks! Emendation yields: "The day of G OD is faster than a runner, / Fleeter than a warrior"; cf. Ps. 19.6.

That day shall be a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of calamity and desolation, A day of darkness and deep gloom, A day of densest clouds,

A day of horn blasts and alarms— Against the fortified towns And the lofty corner towers.

I will bring distress on the people, And they shall walk like the blind, Because they sinned against G OD ; Their blood shall be spilled like dust, And their fat l fat Or "marrow"; meaning of Heb. uncertain. like dung.

Moreover, their silver and gold Shall not avail to save them. On the day of G OD 's wrath, In the fire of such passion, The whole land shall be consumed; For [God] will make a terrible end Of all who dwell in the land.

Chapter 2

Gather together, gather, O nation without shame, Before the day the decree is born— The day flies by like chaff a O nation ... chaff Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Emendation yields: "O straw [Aramaic gel] not gathered in, / Before you are driven like flying chaff"; cf. Ps. 35.5. — Before G OD 's fierce anger Overtakes you, Before the day G OD 's anger Overtakes you.

Seek G OD, All you humble of the land Who have fulfilled God's law; Seek righteousness, Seek humility. Perhaps you will find shelter On the day of G OD 's anger.

Indeed, Gaza shall be deserted And Ashkelon desolate; Ashdod's people shall be expelled in broad daylight, And Ekron shall be uprooted.

Ah, nation of Cherethites Who inhabit the seacoast! There is a word of G OD against you, O Canaan, b Canaan Or "Phoenicia," of which Philistia is regarded as an extension southward. land of the Philistines: I will lay you waste Without inhabitants.

The seacoast Cheroth c Cheroth Meaning of Heb. uncertain. shall become An abode for shepherds and folds for flocks,

And shall be a portion for the remnant of the House of Judah; On these [pastures] they shall graze [their flocks], They shall lie down d lie down Change of vocalization yields "rest [them]"; cf. Song 1.7. at eventide In the houses of Ashkelon. For the E TERNAL their God will take note of them And restore their fortunes.

I have heard the insults of Moab And the jeers of the Ammonites, Who have insulted My people And gloated over their country.

Assuredly, as I live —declares G OD of Hosts, the God of Israel— Moab shall become like Sodom And the Ammonites like Gomorrah: Clumps e Clumps Meaning of Heb. uncertain. of weeds and patches f patches Meaning of Heb. uncertain. of salt, And desolation evermore. The remnant of My people shall plunder them, The remainder of My nation shall possess them.

That is what they'll get for their haughtiness, For insulting and jeering At the people of G OD of Hosts.

G OD will appear terrible against them, Causing all the gods on earth to shrivel; g shrivel Meaning of Heb. uncertain. And all the coastlands of the nations Shall bow in homage— Everyone in their own home.

You Cushites too— They shall be slain by My sword.

[God] will reach out against the north And destroy Assyria— Making Nineveh a desolation, Arid as the desert.

In it flocks shall lie down, Every species of beast, While jackdaws and owls roost on its capitals, The great owl hoots in the window, And the raven [croaks] on the threshold. For its cedarwork is laid bare. h species of beast ... laid bare Meaning of Heb. uncertain.

Is this the exultant city That dwelt secure, That thought in her heart,
"I am, and there is none but me"? Alas, she is become a waste, A lair of
wild beasts! Everyone who passes by her Hisses and makes a hand gesture.
i Hisses and makes a hand gesture To ward off a like fate from
themselves; cf. Jer. 18.16 and note.

Chapter 3

Ah, sullied, polluted, Overbearing a Overbearing Meaning of Heb.
uncertain. Emendation yields "Whore"; cf. Isa. 1.21. city!
She heeds no call, Has learned no lesson; She has not trusted in G OD,
Has not drawn near to her God.
The officials within her Are roaring lions; Her judges are wolves of the
steppe, They leave no bone until morning. b of the steppe, / They leave
no bone until morning Meaning of Heb. uncertain.
Her prophets are reckless, Totally faithless; Her priests profane what is
holy, They give perverse rulings.
But G OD in her midst is righteous, And does no wrong; [God] issues
judgment every morning, As unfailing as the light. The wrongdoer knows no
shame!
I wiped out nations: Their corner towers are desolate; I turned their
thoroughfares into ruins, With none passing by; Their towns lie waste
with nobody around, Without inhabitants.
And I thought that she c she Heb. "you." would fear Me, Would learn a
lesson, And that the punishment I brought on them d them Heb. "her."
Would not be lost on her. e lost on her Lit. "cut off [from] her vision."
Instead, all the more eagerly They have practiced corruption in all their
deeds.
But wait for Me—says G OD — For the day when I arise as an accuser; f
accuser Understanding 'ad as equivalent to 'ed, with Septuagint and
Syriac. When I decide to gather nations, To bring kingdoms together, To
pour out My indignation on them, All My blazing anger. Indeed, by the
fire of My passion All the earth shall be consumed.
For then I will make the peoples pure of speech, g I will make the
peoples pure of speech Thus reversing the primeval confounding of speech
in Babel; cf. Abravanel and Gen. 11.9. So that they all invoke G OD by
name And render service with one accord. h accord Lit. "back," i.e., like
working animals.
From beyond the rivers of Cush, My suppliants i My suppliants Meaning of
Heb. uncertain. Shall bring offerings to Me in Fair Puzai. j Puzai
Emendation yields "Zion." For the thought, cf. Isa. 18.1, 7.
In that day, You will no longer be shamed for all the deeds By which you
have defied Me. For then I will remove The proud and exultant within you,
And you will be haughty no more On My sacred mount. k On My sacred mount
I.e., in My holy land; cf. Isa. 11.9; 57.13; 65.25.
But I will leave within you A poor, humble folk, And they shall find
refuge In the name of G OD.
The remnant of Israel Shall do no wrong And speak no falsehood; A
deceitful tongue Shall not be in their mouths. Only such as these shall
graze and lie down, With none to trouble them.
Shout for joy, Fair Zion, Cry aloud, O Israel! Rejoice and be glad with
all your heart, Fair Jerusalem!
G OD has annulled the judgment against you, And swept away your foes.
Israel's Sovereign G OD is within you; You need fear misfortune no more.
In that day, This shall be said to Jerusalem: Have no fear, O Zion; Let
not your hands droop!
Your God the E TERNAL One is in your midst— A warrior who brings triumph—
Who will rejoice over you and be glad, Who will shout over you with
jubilation Who will lovingly soothe

Those long disconsolate. I lovingly ... disconsolate Meaning of Heb.
uncertain. I will take away from you the woe Over which you endured
mockery. m the woe ... mockery Meaning of Heb. uncertain.
At that time I will make [an end] Of all who afflicted you. And I will
rescue the lame [sheep] And gather the strayed; And I will exchange their
disgrace For fame and renown in all the earth.
At that time I will gather you, And at [that] time I will bring you
[home]; For I will make you renowned and famous Among all the peoples on
earth, When I restore your fortunes Before their n their Heb. "your."
very eyes —said G OD.